

PHILANTHROPY MATTERS

Branches Mentees Grow, Climb & Achieve



by Yurianna Mikolay
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As National Mentor Month nears its end, we take the opportunity to celebrate Branches Florida City, another great charity with a mentoring component that has inspired considerable support from the Ocean Reef Community.

Branches' strives to "empower people to pursue life changing opportunities," and that's exactly what they do through their Grow (youth), Climb (teen) and Achieve (adult/family) programs. The Foundation's Community Grants



Jay Holmes (center), volunteering at Branches on Thanksgiving Day, says he would "highly recommend" arranging volunteer experiences through the Foundation.

program has supported all three over the years since our first grant in 2009. In the wake of a major fire in 2010, the Foundation also provided emergency funding to keep programs going and rallied with several of our Donor Advised Funds and Ocean Reef family foundations and organizations, including the Protestant Foundation of the Ocean Reef Chapel, to support a new building and continued success.

We'd learn in 2014 when the new facility opened and was named "The **Trish & Dan Bell** Family Branches Center" for the supporters who provided matching funds for the capital campaign, that they are Ocean Reef social members, as well. Several spaces, including an innovative Center for Financial Stability, are now named for Ocean Reef entities.

In years since, the Foundation has funded Grow & Climb Guides youth programs with a "double" mentoring aspect. Teens are mentored by adults to achieve and serve as leaders and positive role models for younger students, often continuing to serve on breaks from college as examples of what kids from the neighborhood can achieve. Branches is proud to report that to date 100 percent of Guides in the mentor program are well on their way to achieve, meaning they stay on track and graduate high school and successfully navigate college or other gainful employment opportunities.



The Ocean Reef Community Foundation Computer Classroom was funded by the Community Grants program as a result of member participation in All Charities Weekend.



Roberto has served in the mentoring program for several years, embracing new challenges and duties each year. In addition to leading K-1st Grade, last summer he led his team in planning and supervising all recreational activities. He reports that scheduling and empowering his peers pushed him to be more responsible and organized, and that the experience "has changed my entire academic career."

Culinary CONVENIENCE TRUCK

Monday, January 30

In front of Carysfort Hall
10:30am-4:30pm

Visit the Culinary Convenience Truck where you can have your knives sharpened or buy a new set.

There will also be a range of culinary items available for purchase.

Member accounts, cash and checks will be accepted.

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Danielle led the 2nd Graders last summer and was responsible for planning and leading the assemblies, engaging 125 children. She is now more confident and willing to try new things, including joining clubs and taking on leadership roles at school. She said, "It has been a privilege to serve, especially as a role model for young girls."